MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM13-0026536		
Date Assigned:	11/22/2013	Date of Injury:	11/07/1993
Decision Date:	01/23/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/19/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The physician reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The applicant is a represented [redacted] employee who has filed a claim for chronic shoulder pain, headaches, dyslipidemia, hypertension, and unspecified gastrointestinal stress reportedly associated with an industrial injury of November 7, 1993. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; adjuvant medications; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; muscle relaxants; and the apparent imposition of permanent work restrictions through an agreed medical evaluation. It does not appear that the applicant has returned to work with those limitations in place. In a utilization review report of September 8, 2013, the claims administrator denied a urine drug screen. The applicant's attorney later appealed. An earlier note of August 9, 2013, is notable for comments that the applicant is using Flexeril, Prilosec, Norco, Neurontin, and Percocet for headaches, low back pain, and neck pain. The applicant's work status is not clearly specified. A qualitative drug screen is reportedly performed in the clinic, the attending provider writes. The results of the said drug tests are reviewed. Despite writing it, only qualitative testing was performed. The attending provider in fact did perform confirmatory testing and listed the confirmatory cutoffs of at least 25 different opioid metabolites before concluding that nothing was detected.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Retrospective urine drug test, DOS: 8/19/2013: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 43.

Decision rationale: While page 43 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines does endorse intermittent urine drug testing in the chronic pain population, the MTUS does not address specific parameters for to establish a frequency with which to perform urine drug testing. As noted in the ODG Chronic Pain Chapter, urine drug testing topic, an attending provider should clearly state those drug tests and/or drug panels which he intends to test for along with the request for authorization and state how the said test will influence the treatment plan and/or treatment picture. In this case, the attending provider did not clearly state what drug tests and/or drug panels he intends to test for. He further stated in his progress note report that a qualitative drug screen will be performed. However, the lab actually performed a quantitative drug screen. Per the ODG Chronic Pain Chapter, urine drug testing topic, confirmatory testing is generally indicated only in the emergency department drug overdose context. It is not recommended in the routine office visit context present here. For all of these reasons, then, it appears that several criteria for pursuit of drug testing has not been met. Accordingly, the request is not certified.